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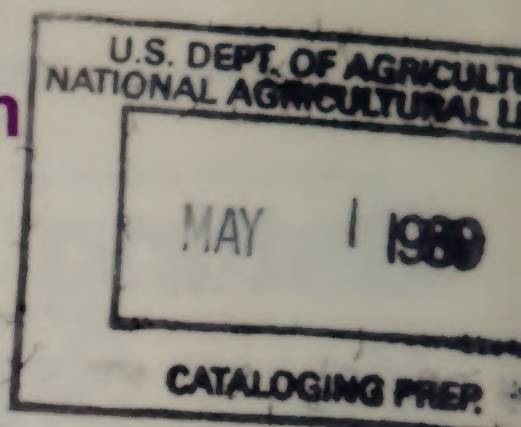
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Getting Help for Your Small Farm From USDA

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Introduction

The purpose of this brochure is to provide information to the small or limited resource farmer on some of the services available from USDA that are provided by the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS), Extension Service (ES), Farmers Home Administration (FmHA), and Soil Conservation Service (SCS). It is intended to provide readily accessible information on available services as well as to identify information for each program.

The Agricultural Credit Act of 1987 (HR 3030) requires USDA to assist small or limited resource farmers and their advocates. The Small or Limited Resource Farmer Initiative (SLRFI) is maintained in the Office of Advocacy and Enterprise (OAE).

Inquiries may be sent to:

Mr. Dana A Froe
Special Assistant
U. S. Department of Agriculture
Office of Advocacy and Enterprise, Equal Opportunity
Room 1226, South Building
Washington, DC 20250

Telephone: 1-800-543-1289



Payments for Your Crops

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The Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service is responsible for a wide variety of programs of the Department in its relations with the farmer and the agriculture industry. Its programs are in the general field of production adjustment, conservation assistance, price, farm income, and market stabilization. ASCS committees at the State and county levels carry out ASCS programs requiring direct dealings at the farm level.

Assistance Available

Payments are available to guarantee an established crop price to eligible producers. Eligibility is achieved by participation in annual production adjustment programs. A producer who participates can also qualify for loans after harvest, using produced commodities as collateral.

An owner, landlord, tenant, or sharecropper on a farm where the commodity is planted that meets program requirements is eligible to apply for payments and loans.

Cost-sharing assistance is available to enable farmers to perform conservation measures to improve water quality, encourage energy conservation measures, and assure a continued supply of necessary food and fiber for a strong and healthy people and economy. The program is directed toward the solution of critical soil, water, energy, woodland, and pollution abatement problems on farms and ranches.

An owner, landlord, tenant, sharecropper on a farm or ranch, or an associated group that bears a part of the cost of an approved conservation practice is eligible to apply for cost-share assistance.

For more information on these or other programs, contact the local ASCS office or call 1-800-543-1289.



Assistance from Colleges and Universities

The Cooperative Extension System, a national educational network, links research, science, and technology to the needs of people where they live and work. Extension's purpose is education — practical education for Americans to use in dealing with the critical issues that impact their daily lives and the Nation's future.

Extension education combines the expertise and resources of Federal, State, and local governments. The partners in the unique system are:

- The Extension Service at the U.S. Department of Agriculture.
- Extension professionals at land-grant universities throughout the United States and its territories.
- Extension professionals in nearly all of the Nation's 3,150 counties.

Thousands of paraprofessionals and nearly 3 million volunteers support this partnership and magnify its impact. Strong linkages with both public and private external groups are also crucial to the Extension System's strength and vitality.

The Extension System has identified eight national initiatives to provide a new focus for its educational efforts.

These first national initiatives are:

- Alternative Agricultural Opportunities
- Building Human Capital
- Competitiveness and Profitability of American Agriculture
- Conservation and Management of Natural Resources
- Family and Economic Well-Being
- Improving Nutrition, Diet, and Health
- Revitalizing Rural America
- Water Quality

A ninth initiative, Youth at Risk, was identified recently.

National Extension professionals in agriculture, natural resources, home economics, human nutrition, rural and community development, and 4-H and youth programs focus their educational programs on these initiatives.

Assistance Available

Through grants made to land-grant institutions, State and county Extension Service personnel provide educational and technical assistance to small farmers in the areas of agricultural production, home food production, new land use ideas, diversion of farm resources from traditional to alternative crops, 4-H Youth development, retention of farmland by minorities, and production efficiency.

Through grants made to land-grant institutions, State and county Extension Service personnel provide educational and technical assistance to 4-H Youth in the areas of leadership, development, and career guidance.

For more information on these or other programs, contact the county Extension Service office nearest you or call 1-800-543-1289.



Financial Help for Small Farms

The Farmers Home Administration provides financial assistance to individuals, groups, communities, and corporations. The agency's loan authorities provide a supplemental source of credit augmenting the efforts of private lenders rather than competing with them. Loans are made to those who cannot obtain sufficient credit at reasonable rates and terms from other sources.

Assistance Available

Farm ownership loans are available to buy, improve, or enlarge farms. Uses may include construction, improvement, or repair of farm homes and service buildings; improvement of on farm water supplies; installation of pollution control or energy conservation measures; refinancing debts; clearing or improving farmland; and establishing nonagricultural enterprises that help farmers supplement their farm income.

Operating loans are available to pay for items needed for farm operations, including livestock, poultry, farm and home equipment, feed, seed, fertilizer, fuel, chemicals, hail and other crop insurance, family living expenses, minor building improvements, water system development, hired labor, and pollution abatement.

Applicants must meet several eligibility requirements.

For more information on these or other programs, contact the local FmHA office serving the area where the farm is located or call 1-800-543-1289.



Assistance in Resource Conservation and Development

The Soil Conservation Service provides technical help in soil and water conservation activities.

The agency works through nearly 3,000 local soil conservation districts.

To increase its help to limited resource farmers, as part of the Agricultural Credit Act of 1987, SCS is working with 1890 institutions and others in developing materials and outlets.

Working with other agencies, SCS also seeks to increase its assistance to Native Americans.



Assistance Available

Through local conservation districts, farmers can get assistance from SCS in planning and applying conservation practices. These practices include conservation tillage, waterways, terraces, stripcropping, windbreaks, and irrigation water management.

Soil surveys are available for most farms and ranches. They give information on the kinds of soils on a farm and their uses.

For more information, contact your local USDA Soil Conservation Service office or call 1-800-543-1289.

Native Americans

Services and programs for American Indians and Alaskan Natives should be directed to the Coordinator, Native American Activities, Office of Intergovernmental Affairs, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC 20250, Telephone 202-447-3805.

All programs and services are available to anyone without regard to race, color, sex, age, handicap, religion, or national origin.